

NEW ORLEANS NOSTALGIA

Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions

By Ned Hémard

Taft Visits New Orleans

1909 was an interesting year for New Orleans. One of the city's benevolent aid societies known as "The Tramps" attended a performance at the Pythian Temple, a theater erected the previous year by a group of African American businessmen on the corner of Gravier and Saratoga streets. This musical comedy (performed by the Smart Set) included a skit entitled, "There Never Was and Never Will Be a King Like Me," about a Zulu king and his tribe. From this the group was inspired to organize the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club, now such a vibrant part of the Crescent City's Mardi Gras history. And many significant jazz musicians played at the Pythian Temple's roof top garden, such as Armand J. Piron, Sidney Bechet and Papa Celestin's Original Tuxedo Jazz Orchestra.

Also in 1909, General Beauregard's home on Chartres Street was the scene of a Mafia shoot-out. Owned then by the Giacoma family (who were posing as wine importers when in fact they were running a profitable tax-free liquor business), the house was the site of an extortion plot gone wrong. When the family wouldn't pay off, the family opened fire on the would-be Mafia assassins. Three men were dead and a fourth man was wounded. In the years that followed, the Giacoma clan guarded the house like a fortress.

The New Orleans Mint was decommissioned as a functioning mint in 1909, having produced over 427 million gold and silver coins there from 1838 to 1861 and from 1879 to 1909. It would not take part in the production of an entirely new coin: the Lincoln penny.

August 1909 saw a radical departure from the accepted styling of United States coins, introducing for the first time a portrait coin in an annual series. Honoring the nation's first bearded president, this was the same year as the inauguration of William Howard Taft who, to date, is the last U.S. president to have facial hair while in office. His fashionable handlebar moustache sat atop an affable grin and (according to biographer Henry F. Pringle) "the most infectious chuckle

in the history of politics." The 27th president also visited New Orleans in 1909.

President William Howard Taft arrived in New Orleans on October 30, 1909, aboard the flagship *Oleander*. America's heaviest president at over 300 pounds (who had to super-size the White House bathtub) taunted the congressmen and governors of the states along his Mississippi River journey for (according to the New York Times) "having resorted to the humiliating device of land transportation at one stage of the journey." Taft laughed that "the fleet had come through without the loss a of a single man," but declared "the waterways of this country must be used eventually to carry the bulk of heavy merchandise."

Taft (accompanied by 24 governors, 117 congressmen and senators, including Uncle Joe Cannon, Speaker of the House, and 3 diplomats) was in town to speak before the "Lakes-to-the-Gulf Waterways Convention" in favor of river improvements. President Taft and his flotilla were welcomed by "the shrieks of sirens, the clanging of bells, and the cheers of 100,000 citizens" (according to the New York Times). He and his party were whisked away by carriages to the St. Charles Hotel (his home for the two day visit), where the President reviewed a parade held in his honor.

After lunch with Archbishop James H. Blenk, the President was driven to the College of the Immaculate Conception on Baronne Street (then the name of Jesuit High School) where he addressed the young men, their teachers, alumni, and guests who had gathered in the courtyard below. From the balcony draped in stars and stripes, he spoke directly to the students and said, "My boys, I am glad to be with you. I congratulate you on being where you are."

Then it was off to the *Athenaeum* to address the "Waterways Convention", with later glimpses of the LSU-Sewanee (University of the South) and Tulane-University of Mississippi football games. An evening dinner was held in the Chief Executive's honor at the Pickwick Club, followed by a gala grand opera presentation. A late supper at one of the city's French restaurants finished off the evening. Dinner and supper?

The next day's activities (Sunday morning) included a service at the Unitarian Church, a long automobile tour (Taft was the first president to own a car at the White House) punctuated by a luncheon at the Jackson Barracks. Professor Alcée Fortiér was in charge of the committee for the "Ride Through Historic New Orleans" and tendered the address that Halloween day a century ago. President Taft also played some golf with Philip Werlein. After a sacred concert at Tulane University, the President retired to his train before its departure on Monday morning.

On that very same Halloween day, 1909, the Woman Suffrage Party was founded. Taft commented like an oracle on November 2, 1909, "I am not in favor of suffrage for women until I can be convinced that all the women desire it; and when they desire it I am in favor of giving it."

President-elect Taft had made an earlier visit to New Orleans in 1909 aboard the man-of-war *Birmingham*, less than a month before his March inauguration. Having just come from the Isthmus of Panama, Taft informed the cheering thousands that the Panama Canal would definitely be opened to commerce by 1915. (The canal was actually formally opened on August 15, 1914, two years ahead of schedule.) The newly elected Executive-in Chief spoke at Gallier Hall (where he viewed a parade), attended the Elves of Oberon Ball, and was guest of honor at a 400-person banquet. He stayed at the Hotel Grunewald, which New Orleanians know as the Roosevelt.

On the second day of that first visit, Taft spoke before a crowd at Pelican Park on Carrollton Avenue (an event totally organized and hosted by African Americans). Reverend Melvin Collins III, presiding minister of the First Free Mission Baptist Church, while recently searching the church's library, was thrilled to discover a program bill entitled "Reception to President-elect William H. Taft Under the auspices of the Colored Young Men's Christian Association and Allied Organizations." The program date was February 12, 1909.

More important than serving as President of the United States was Taft's dream of becoming Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He got that wish in 1921, becoming the 10th U.S. Chief Justice immediately following Louisiana's own Edward Douglass White (whose Jesuit *alma mater* President Taft visited that October day back in 1909).

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William Howard Taft and the Separation of Church and State in the Philippines

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American annexation of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War presented the United States with an unusual set of problems and challenges for which it had little experience and no preparation. Governing over seven million people almost seven thousand miles away would be difficult enough, but removing the vestiges of four centuries of Spanish colonialism would add enormous unexpected complications. Inherent in these complications was the long tradition of administrative interrelationship and shared responsibilities between the Spanish colonial government and the Roman Catholic Church. For American authorities it was essential to end the relationship and separate church from state to assure the successful creation of a new Philippine government. The process of doing so would be delicate and detailed, requiring understanding, tact, and patience. To accomplish this formidable task President William McKinley chose as first civil governor a little known federal circuit judge from Ohio, William Howard Taft. It would be the most difficult assignment of Taft's long and distinguished career and one that caused him to reject a Supreme Court appointment—his most cherished ambition.

Before he actually stepped on Philippine soil Taft had his first direct encounter with the complexities of the religious problem. Still aboard the transport that had brought him and his fellow members of the Second Philippine Commission from the United States, Taft met with Archbishop Placide L. Chapelle who presented him with an official statement of the position of the Catholic Church concerning the Philippine Islands. Chapelle, the archbishop of New Orleans, had been designated Apostolic Delegate to the Philippine Islands. The purpose of his embarrassingly early visit was to acquaint the commissioners with the most pressing problems confronting the church and to voice his own personal dissatisfaction

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with the policies of the current military government. Although this initial meeting between churchman and commissioners was correct and cordial, it was the beginning of many bitter months of misunderstanding and frustration for both church and state.

Taft and company were wary of the archbishop and suspicious of his intent.¹ Later, after a protocol return visit to Chapelle's residence, they declined his invitation to a formal dinner. Fearing such contacts would embroil them in religious controversies they agreed among themselves to maintain an aloof, neutral stance so they could approach solutions to those controversies with greater objectivity. For them this position was necessary. The church-state problems of the Philippines were highly complex and totally foreign to the American tradition. The issues themselves were already the object of heated political debate on both sides of the Pacific, a debate which was echoed in the halls of the Vatican.

Obviously Taft's basic consideration was the arrangement of an equitable procedure for the separation of church and state in a territory that had witnessed four centuries of close interrelationship between the Roman Catholic Church and Spanish Colonial government. Taft was not deceived this would be a simple problem for him. In fact, he recognized it as one of the principal reasons his legal training and judicial experience were so desired by the McKinley administration when he was asked to go to Manila. Indeed, this very reason was uppermost when he hesitated to accept the appointment, fearing that failure, which to him seemed quite possible, would doom his future chances for a higher federal judicial post.²

Debate on the religious implications of American occupation was a substantial part of the broader anti-imperialism controversy raging through the United States after the armistice with Spain in August, 1898. It began, however, even earlier when the United States was contemplating hostilities on behalf of the Cuban insurrection. The challenge of a war with Catholic Spain left many American Catholics with the fear that their loyalty as American citizens was suspect. Comprising less than one-seventh of the total U.S. population, these particular Americans were still on the defensive from resurgent American nativism spearheaded by the American Protective Association, an avowed anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic organization. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the United States, itself, had been sharply divided over the issue of how to

1. Taft to his wife, 10 July 1900, quoted in Henry F. Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft*, 2 vols. (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939), 1:177.

2. *Ibid.*, 1:160-62.

integrate the Church into a Protestant dominated, pluralistic American society. After war was declared, rumors and press dispatches of real or potential Catholic sabotage to the American war effort added to their general discomfort.³ An anti-Catholic hostility also set in when it was revealed that Pope Leo XIII had endeavored to act as a mediator between the United States and Spain.⁴ Within two weeks, the American bishops found it necessary to issue a joint pastoral letter professing the loyalty of Catholics as Americans.⁵

Under these circumstances it was not surprising that Catholics in the United States would take a keen interest in the Spanish-American War and its long-term aftermath. Their religious periodicals, far more vocal and influential spokesmen for the Catholic minority than today's, soon found themselves the watchdogs of military activity as American troops occupied Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. Starting in the summer of 1898 these journals reacted with expanding vigor to the increasing number of statements in Protestant journals that the former Spanish possessions offered a vast new mission field for American Protestantism.⁶ By the time the Treaty of Paris was signed, a vast majority of the Catholic press and most prominent Catholic laymen (but only a few members of the clergy) found themselves in the anti-imperialist camp, not so much on the philosophical issue that a republic should not be an empire, but on the more practical question of how to protect the Church's vitality in those possessions. Justified or not, this sentiment rested on a fear that American occupation policy was designed to destroy the institution of the Roman Catholic Church in the dependencies. Unless defeated in the Islands, a similar policy could be directed against the Church in the United States itself.⁷

Thus, the national debate on imperialism was clouded by serious religious overtones. The focus of debate and, more particularly, the focus of Catholic anxiety was the Phillipine Islands. Even after the treaty annexing the Islands was ratified, the debate did not end. Each question of how American rule would be established merely fragmented the debate and made each proposed policy a new controversy. The military regimes of Generals Otis and MacArthur had

3. *San Francisco Monitor*, 30 April 1898; *New York Times*, 10 May 1898; John Ireland to Denis O'Connell, 11 May 1898, Archives of Diocese of Richmond, box 13.

4. *New York Times*, 5 April 1898; *New York Herald*, 5 April 1898; *Christian Advocate*, 7 April 1898.

5. *New York Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1898.

6. *New York Times*, 9 May 1898; *Missionary Review of the World* 21 (June 1898):462; *Christian Advocate*, 1 September 1898; *New York Freeman's Journal*, 30 April 1898; *Boston Pilot*, 18 June 1898.

7. *San Francisco Monitor*, 21 January 1899; *New York Freeman's Journal*, 9 September 1899.

been highly criticized in the American press long before Judge Taft set foot on the Islands, and he fell heir both to their successes and to their failures.

Taft was well aware that his major problem would be in dealing with the Roman Catholic Church. He had poured over the report of the First Philippine Commission, read books about the Islands, consulted with recent visitors, and, as any politician would, reviewed the variety of opinions concerning the Islands expressed in the American press. Although there were Muslims in the southern islands, pagans in the hills, new Protestant mission churches, and, later, a Philippine national Catholic Church, the issue really was not one of religious pluralism. Clearly, for Taft, the facts were these: 90 per cent of the Filipinos were nominally Roman Catholic; most of these, when possible, regularly attended religious services; and they relied exclusively on the Church for such rudimentary social services as education, health care, and public charities. Popular or not, the Catholic Church was an essential part of the daily lives of the vast majority of Filipinos.⁸

Taft's assignment to bring about the separation of church and state was a highly complex one. The Catholic Church had enjoyed the patronage and protection of the Spanish crown for four hundred years. During that long period, agencies of the Church had been granted income-producing property, subsidies from the colonial treasury, and permanent use of crown land as building sites. In return, these agencies provided all of the educational and charitable services in the Islands. Priests were expected to assist the colonial government when necessary, and, indeed, the local priest in remote rural districts was, more often than not, simultaneously teacher, judge, and civil administrator. Typical of its colonial rule elsewhere, Spain governed the Filipinos through the Church.

To be accomplished successfully the process of the separation would have to be done carefully and dispassionately. Layer on layer of practices based on tradition, expediency, and royal edict had to be examined, eliminated when necessary, and new procedures substituted in their place. Under the best of circumstances this would take time and superhuman patience from all concerned. Unfortunately neither time nor patience remained when Taft assumed his duties. The Insurrection of 1896, the intrusion of the United States in 1898, and the establishment of Emilio Aguinaldo's provisional Philippine government in 1899 collectively destroyed the prospects for dispas-

8. "Religion," *First Philippine Commission Report* (Senate Document no. 190, 56th Cong., 2d sess.), p. 109 (hereafter cited as *Commission Report*).

sionate formulation of new policies.

Basically five major church-state issues confronted the American administrator: the widespread unpopularity of four orders of Spanish friars, the agricultural holdings of these friar orders, the organization of a public school system, the ownership and administration of charitable and educational facilities, and the titles of ownership for building used for religious worship. Each of these issues had to be settled independently, and yet all were closely intertwined. The solution of one would drastically affect the solutions for the others.

Unfortunately these issues could not be approached immediately because another religious-oriented situation momentarily overshadowed and complicated them. This was the extensive destruction and desecration of churches and convents caused by the U.S. Army's efforts to suppress Aguinaldo's supporters who were rebelling against the American occupation. Often the strongest and easiest to defend structures in the barrios, both sides used them as bases for military operations. They became the targets for shelling, rifle-fire, assault, and occupation. To protect these buildings, Spanish, Filipino, and American priests sent dozens of protests to American military authorities both in Manila and in Washington. American journalists writing from the Islands flooded the press in the United States with dramatic reports and photographs of the destruction.⁹ In desperation, Archbishop Chapelle had cabled President McKinley to send out a new governor because General Otis was "absolutely incapable to defend the credit of your government."¹⁰

Despite official military denials that such damage was extensive, if indeed it existed at all, much of the Catholic press in the United States used this as an issue for its first attack against what it branded "the anti-Catholic policies of the McKinley administration."¹¹ When the secular press reported returning American soldiers were bringing as war souvenirs sacred vessels, religious art, and clerical vestments, the Catholic press was even more vehement. Newspaper articles about Catholic priests and nuns being held as prisoners of war merely added to the animosity. Responding to urgent cables from Manila and Hong Kong, James Cardinal Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore and Primate of the Church in the United States, personally appealed to President McKinley for greater care in the

9. *San Francisco Monitor*, 27 May 1899; *Collier's Weekly*, 9 September 1899; *Boston Pilot*, 4 November 1899.

10. Cable: Chapelle to McKinley, 19 January 1900, McKinley Correspondence, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., vol. 44.

11. *New York Freeman's Journal*, 14 July 1900, 12 October 1900, 2 February 1901.

protection of religious personnel and church property.¹²

Increasing criticism from Catholics within the United States began to plague the McKinley administration, already sensitive to similar criticism from other quarters. With McKinley's reelection campaign soon to start, Taft could ill afford to delay a resolution of these basic religious issues confronting the Philippine government. Himself sensitive to the barbs of both the Catholic and Protestant journals he endeavored to cloak the Philippine Commission with an air of neutrality and objectivity as each religious question was discussed. The more controversial the issue the more carefully Taft explained the reasons for the policy that finally emerged.

Most pressing and controversial was the question of the future in the Islands of the four orders of Spanish friars—Recollects, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans. Each order, directed and controlled by its own motherhouse in Spain, through the centuries had sent thousands of Spanish priests to the Philippines to labor in the mission field and to assist when necessary the Spanish colonial government. By the middle of the nineteenth century these friars and several congregations of nuns often were the only contact a native Filipino had with Spanish culture and Spanish authority. They provided all of the education, operated the hospitals, orphanages, and old people's homes, and maintained the cemeteries. Frequently they were tax assessors, registrars of births, marriages, and deaths, and recorders of titles, deeds, and bills-of-sale.¹³ Many Filipinos and an increasing number of European visitors to the Islands called them corrupt, cruel, and immoral. By the end of the century Filipino nationalists demanded their removal. One of Spain's concessions for the settlement of an earlier insurrection in 1896 was that the friars would be sent home. Yet they were not.¹⁴

When Commodore Dewey returned Aguinaldo to Luzon in May 1898, the issue of the friars was reopened. After organizing his own provisional government, Aguinaldo and his followers literally drove the friars from their parishes and estates. Most of them fled to American protection in Manila, but many others reportedly were imprisoned, tortured, or killed. When the new insurrection broke

12. *Catholic World* 70 (October 1899):141; Gibbons to Alger, 24 October 1898, and Bishop Piazzoli to Gibbons, 14 October 1898, Gibbons Correspondence, Archives of Archdiocese of Baltimore, box 96.

13. "Testimony of Governor Taft," *Affairs in the Philippine Islands* (Senate Document no. 331, 57th Cong., 1st sess.), pt. 1, p. 100; *Lands Held for Ecclesiastical or Religious Use in the Philippines* (Senate Document no. 190, 56th Cong., 2d sess.); Stephen Bonsal, "The Work of the Friars," *North American Review* 175 (October 1902):451-53.

14. "The Secular Clergy and Religious Orders," *Commission Report*, p. 131.

out against the United States the issue was the same: the friars must go.

Both the Schurman and Taft Philippine Commissions as well as the military governments of Generals Otis and MacArthur agreed that the continued presence of the friars would impede American pacification of the Islands. Their removal was not exactly a question of the separation of church and state; it was, on the contrary, a significant element toward the creditability of American policy before the Filipino people. Taft as the agent of that policy was committed to develop a procedure for getting the friars returned to Spain.

The issue, however, was not simple, and this was the reason for Archbishop Chapelle's initial meeting with Taft and the other Commissioners. Arriving in the Islands a year before Taft, the archbishop had quickly become identified with the friar cause, insisting that the friars were grossly maligned by the press and demanding their protection by U.S. troops.¹⁵ More important, however, Chapelle recognized that the removal of the friars would endanger the religious activities of the Church, already critically short of manpower. The ratio of laymen to priests was five times greater than that currently existing in the United States, itself still officially a mission country. The loss of 1100 priests from the total of 1500 would cripple the Church, and it would be years before enough American and Filipino priests could be prepared to replace them. With this his principal concern, the increasing number of American Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian missionaries arriving in the Islands haunted Chapelle.

Complicating a solution to the question were the extensive agricultural estates of the Friar orders, 410,000 acres of the best farmland in the Islands. Leased to 60,000 tenant farmers, these estates produced the income that had supported much of the friars' charitable activities and their parish churches. Yet since 1896 no revenues had been collected and much church property had fallen into disrepair. Without this revenue the Church would have to rely on voluntary contributions, a practice that was not part of Philippine Catholic tradition. As Apostolic Delegate, Chapelle was convinced he had to be adamant on the friar question if he were to restore essential church-related services to the Filipino people.

The validity of the friars' land titles was not in question. The problem would come in attempting to restore the friars to actual possession. Aguinaldo, to gain support for his Provisional govern-

15. Chapelle to McKinley, 20 September 1899, McKinley Correspondence, vol. 38.

ment, had declared the estates confiscated and handed them over to the tenants. In the process fifty priests were killed. It would have taken military force to return the friars. So Taft was equally adamant that they be sent back to Spain. To make this withdrawal palatable he was willing to have the Philippine government buy the agricultural estates and sell them back to the former tenants on reasonable terms. Taft offered \$5 million for the land and honestly expected the friars to accept it readily.¹⁶

Negotiations dragged out as the friars haggled over the price and Chapelle undermined Taft's position. The relationship between the archbishop and the governor broke down completely. Going over Taft's head, Chapelle sent off angry cablegrams to Secretary of War Elihu Root and to Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt, insisting that the friars be restored to their parishes, by military force if necessary. Taft, too, appealed to his superiors; they in turn sought the advice of prominent American Catholics, particularly Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, both moderates among the American hierarchy.¹⁷

Negotiations over the friars had come to a complete halt by the winter of 1901-2 when illness forced Taft to return to the United States. While recuperating from surgery Taft held a series of conferences with Roosevelt, Root, Gibbons, and Ireland trying to determine the best approach. The obvious answer was direct negotiation with the Vatican, and it was agreed that Taft would go to Rome.¹⁸ Enthusiastic for the idea, Archbishop Ireland contacted editors of religious periodicals to get their support. Both the *Outlook* and the *Independent*, highly regarded Protestant journals, published favorable editorials, while Ireland wrote several of his own for publication in Catholic and secular newspapers.¹⁹ In general the press favored the plan.

To avoid the appearance of a formal diplomatic mission, Taft merely was to stop off in Rome on his return to Manila in the summer of 1902. His meeting with Leo XIII was a pleasant surprise; he described the ninety-year-old pontiff as "quite bubbling with humor" and "lively as a cricket."²⁰ Despite the pope's humor and

16. Taft to Root, 11 August 1900, 21 October 1900, Taft Private and Official Correspondence, Letterpress Books, box 1, MSS. div., Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

17. Ireland to O'Connell, 7 June 1901, Archives of the Diocese of Richmond, box 16.

18. Ireland to Gibbons, 25 August 1901, Gibbons Correspondence, box 98; Gibbons to Roosevelt, 10 December 1901, Roosevelt Correspondence, vol. 56, MSS. div., Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

19. Ireland to Roosevelt, 21 December 1901, Roosevelt Correspondence, vol. 56.

20. Taft to his wife, 7 June 1902, quoted in Pringle, *The Life and Times of William Howard Taft*, 1:228.

friendliness, the four orders were more powerful than Taft expected, and an acceptable agreement could not be finalized in Rome. Nevertheless, Pope Leo was impressed by Taft's willingness to be fair to Catholic interests. In January 1903 he issued an encyclical establishing a Philippine hierarchy totally independent of Spanish influence and appointed American priests to fill the sees.²¹ Realizing, too, that Chapelle had become persona non grata, the pope withdrew him as Apostolic Delegate, replacing him eventually with Archbishop Giovanni Guidi.²² Taft liked Guidi, and a strong friendship developed between the two.

Ultimately the "Friars Question" settled itself. Most of the friars voluntarily returned to Spain while the remainder were content to remain in Manila. In the meantime, with the urging of Guidi, the orders officially accepted \$7.2 million for their estates. The Philippine government then began the process of reselling the land in small parcels to the former tenants.

Meanwhile the creation of a public school system presented yet another issue of controversy for the American Philippine administration. Spanish practice had been to build or endow school facilities and then delegate responsibility for administration and instruction to Catholic authorities. The Church itself added to these facilities from its own resources, or erected new ones on land technically owned by the government. After generations of usage the Catholic Church in the Islands considered these educational properties and their endowments its own. Yet when the Spanish government formally ceded sovereignty to the United States much of this property legally belonged to the American government. The United States had become a partner with the Catholic Church in the ownership of almost all of the educational facilities in the Islands.²³

A start had been made toward disentangling this overlapping structure of ownership and responsibility. Under the military government of General Otis some American administrators and lay teachers were appointed. Upon the recommendation of the First Philippine Commission, the McKinley administration agreed that an American style public school system must be established and this should be totally divorced from ecclesiastical control. The policy established was based on a system of compromise which permitted

21. Leo XIII, "The Church in the Philippines," *American Catholic Quarterly Review* 28 (April 1903):373-77.

22. Ireland to Maria Storer, 29 March 1902, in *In Memory Bellamy Storer*, ed. Maria Storer (Boston: Merrymount Press, 1923), p. 66.

23. Chapelle to Otis, 6 April 1900, in *Education in the Philippine Islands* (Senate Document no. 129, 56th Cong., 1st sess.), p. 10 (hereafter cited as *Education*).

the Church to present legitimate claims to property in which it had the principal investment. Governor Taft was charged with the responsibility of negotiating with Catholic authorities each of these individual claims.

Again the Catholic press in the United States found the education policy a threat to the Catholicity of the Filipino people. Disregarding the complexities of titles of ownership, Catholic writers aimed their criticism at the personnel involved in the educational structure. Although the first Superintendent of Schools for Manila was a Catholic Army chaplain, subsequent administrators and teachers were reported to have been supplied by Protestant mission boards and the YMCA. Formal orders removing religious emblems from the walls of school buildings and prohibiting any religious instruction in the schools further aggravated Catholic opinion, both Filipino and American.²⁴

Governor Taft was urged to take stronger steps to placate Catholic opinion. He admitted to Secretary Root some basis in fact existed for this criticism. Retired ministers had been used as educators and were frequently involved in missionary or evangelical meetings. He was dissatisfied too that the Superintendent of Schools ignored his admonitions to assure Catholics that nothing was being done to discriminate against them.²⁵

Taft agreed with President Roosevelt that some administrative changes were necessary for the school system.²⁶ Shortly after his return from Rome he began to bring these about. In October 1902 Bernard Moses and Fred W. Atkinson resigned, the two men most criticized in the Catholic press. Moses, a member of the Philippine Commission, had administrative oversight for educational affairs and Atkinson had been Superintendent of Instruction. Moses was replaced on the Commission by James F. Smith, a Catholic and a Democrat from San Francisco; Smith first had come to the Islands as a colonel of the First California volunteers. Taft refused, however, to name a Catholic as Superintendent of Instruction. His appointment of Elmer B. Bryan was a concession to Filipino Catholics who considered him sympathetic to their interests. Taft also forced a compromise on the question of religious instruction on school premises: priests and nuns were permitted to offer such instruction after regular class hours three times a week to those children whose parents requested it, and any public school teacher

24. *San Francisco Monitor*, 2 June 1900; *Boston Pilot*, 12 January 1901.

25. Taft to Root, 5 July 1902, 26 July 1900, Taft Papers, box 1.

26. Roosevelt to Taft, 31 July 1902, in *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. E. E. Morrison, 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951-54), 3:305.

who tried to influence the religion of his pupils was to be dismissed.²⁷ Hoping all these changes would ease the concern of Roosevelt who was worried about their influence on the congressional elections, Taft wrote Secretary Root: "I should think that even the wildest Catholic editor ought to curb his fury against you and me."²⁸

In the meantime President Roosevelt secretly turned to Archbishop John Ireland for additional help. Although publication of an official report indicated that most of the school teachers were native Filipino Catholics, Roosevelt wanted more American Catholics sent to the Islands as teachers. At the president's request, Ireland sought out qualified Catholic teachers and by the end of 1902 over two hundred recommended by the archbishop were sent under civil service to Philippine assignments.²⁹ Deliberate selection of Catholic teachers continued throughout 1903. Yet no mention of this activity was ever made in the press. Ireland warned his colleagues that any publicity would embarrass the President and destroy his obvious friendliness to the Catholic position.³⁰

Leo XIII's changes in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the Philippines materially assisted Governor Taft in resolving the issues in the separation of church and state. The new Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Guidi, was far more amenable to the Americans than Chapelle, and the new American bishops, with one exception, were naturally more understanding of the American traditions and more cooperative. With a clearer sense of reality on both sides, progress was made in establishing the bases for additional solutions all during 1903. By the end of the year only 246 of the friars were still in the Islands; they were gradually replaced by the increasing number of American priests and from newly established seminaries for the training of Filipinos. Negotiations were also concluded for the settlement of rentals of Church-owned buildings occupied by U.S. troops.

Taft had initiated this attitude of goodwill by his early and liberal approach to the ownership of buildings used for religious worship. Over the protest of some municipal governments Taft insisted that equitable title to these churches was through usage by the Catholics of each parish regardless of who paid for the structures or who technically owned the land on which they were built. On his

27. *Public Laws Passed by the Philippine Commission* (House Document no. 2, 57th Cong., 1st sess.), p. 126.

28. Taft to Root, 22 November 1902, Taft Papers, box 1.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Ireland to Gibbons, 4 May 1903, Gibbons Correspondence, box 100.

recommendation Congress approved this policy in the Philippine Civil Government Bill of 1902 and releases were made "to the bishops of the diocese for the benefit of the Catholics of the parish."³¹

Meanwhile, the ownership of a considerable amount of public-use property was not as easily settled. In addition to cemeteries and schoolhouses this property included three hospitals, two leper colonies, three almshouses, three orphanages, a charitable pawnbroker, a savings bank, the only secondary school, the normal schools, the University of St. Thomas and the College of San Jose, a school of arts and trades, an agricultural college, and a nautical school. During the insurrection much of this property was occupied by either American or Filipino military forces and the religious personnel operating these institutions was forcibly ejected. Often when American troops recaptured the property they refused to restore the original religious occupants.³² Despite protests from Church authorities, the military commanders deferred to "higher authority" for final judicial settlement. The higher authority was Taft, of course, and he insisted that each case had to be settled on its own merits. The result was a long series of litigations through the Philippine courts to determine actual ownership; some of these cases dragged on long after Taft had left the Islands.

Ownership of church-use property was complicated by the appearance of the Filipino Independent Church. Breaking from Rome's authority, Gregorio Aglipay, an ordained Catholic priest, sought to create a national church that would truly represent Filipino religious needs. Claiming to be the true representatives of Philippine Catholics his followers frequently took over churches and ejected the Roman Catholic priests and their loyal parishioners. Taft tried to remain neutral in this controversy, although he apparently did not like Aglipay.³³ Initially he considered the situation a question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the Catholic Church and therefore a problem which Catholic authorities could solve themselves. When the Roman Catholic bishops requested police assistance from Taft he maintained it was only necessary to prove their legitimate titles to the buildings in the courts and police protection would be automatic. Unfortunately this religious schism was

31. William Howard Taft, "Civil Government in the Philippines," *Outlook* 71 (31 May 1902):318.

32. "Benevolent Institutions," *Commission Report*, pp. 41-47; Chapelle to Otis, *Education*, p. 10; Taft to Root, 6 August 1900, Taft Papers, box 1.

33. Taft to Roosevelt, 4 May 1904, Roosevelt Correspondence, vol. 17; see also James A. Robertson, "The Aglipay Schism in the Philippine Islands," *Catholic Historical Review* 4 (October 1918):315-44.

not always that simple; violence did break out between partisans of both factions and it was necessary for the government to restore order.

Fortunately for Taft's reputation as governor of the Philippines the Aglipayan controversy started toward the end of his administration and would vex his successors far more than it had him. Recalled to the United States in 1904 to succeed Elihu Root as Secretary of War, William Howard Taft could honestly feel that he had handled a potentially dangerous assignment with tact, judicious objectivity, and open-handed fairness. The basic philosophy of the separation of church and state had been clearly established; subsequent problems could be solved easier with the clear criteria he had determined. State-supported and state-operated educational and charitable institutions had been created and religious toleration for all denominations had been guaranteed, yet the basic interests and influence of the Roman Catholic Church had been left intact.

Taft's success in coping with the unique challenge of growing religious pluralism in the Philippines can be measured best by the comments in much of the American press when he returned to the United States. The most ardent early critics of McKinley's and Roosevelt's policies now heaped praise on the governor. He was lauded for his "statesmanship" and "fair-mindedness."³⁴ The Federation of Catholic Societies of Kansas sent Taft a resolution in appreciation of his "efforts on behalf of the welfare of Filipino Catholics."³⁵ Perhaps the most significant commentary was that offered by the Apostolic Delegate to the United States. In a speech honoring Taft, this official representative of the pope said "may it be pleasing to His Excellency Mr. Taft to accept the tribute of a grateful heart for all the great good he has done in the government of the Philippines, for the interests of Catholicity in those islands . . . which promise of the most happy future, both political and civil, intellectual and Christian."³⁶

34. *Ave Maria* 57 (13 February 1904):214.

35. Resolution of the Federation of the Catholic Societies of Kansas, 16 May 1907, Taft Semi-Official Correspondence, Philippine Commission Papers, National Archives, R.G. 1534-78.

36. Speech of Cardinal Satolli, 20 June 1904, Taft Papers, box 87.